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A DISCOURSE

PREACHED AT THE

INSTALLATION OF REV. HORACE H. LEAVITT

AS PASTOR OF THE
TRINITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

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BY

EDWARDS A. PARK.

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SERMON.

You will find the words of the text in Matt. x: 5-42; also in Luke x: 1-16. According to the statement in Matthew, the words which he quotes in our text were addressed to the twelve apostles when they were first sent forth as preachers of the truth. The address formed a kind of ordination sermon delivered by the Master to the Twelve. According to the statement of Luke, the words which he quotes in our text were addressed to the seventy disciples when they were first sent forth as preachers of the truth. The address formed a kind of ordination sermon delivered by the Master to the Seventy. The two addresses, however, contain one and the same doctrine, and are, substantially, one and the same discourse. Some passages of the discourse are omitted by Matthew and inserted by Luke; some are omitted by Luke and inserted by Matthew. Matthew inserts elsewhere some of the passages which he omits in this discourse, and Luke notices elsewhere some of the thoughts which he omits here. The inspired evangelists, by their repetitions of the Saviour's words, are seen to have regarded these words as eminently important. They may well form the theme of the present installation sermon.

The text has many references to holy acts performed in the present life, and it implies that these acts will be rewarded in the future life. It has also references to sinful acts performed in this world, and it implies that these acts will be punished in the world to come. When the apostles and the disciples were first sent forth as preachers, they were

comparatively ill-informed on the doctrines of atonement and justification by faith, yet the Saviour announced to them: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me;" and "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Matt. x: 14, 15; Luke x: 10-16). These, and several other verses in our text, suggest the truth that the condition of all men in the world to come depends on the character which they form in this world: that the present life is our scene of probation; the future, of retribution.

There are German and other European divines who exert a marked influence over our churches, and are inclined to think that men who in this world have not been furnished with an opportunity of forming a full and final decision in regard to the atonement of Christ will have such an opportunity in the world to come, and may then secure the pardon which they failed to secure while they lived on earth. The aim of the present discourse will be to state some general considerations favoring the doctrine that *no men who have persevered in sin through this life will ever obtain their pardon in the future life*. The argument will be conducted, not by particular comments on the texts which prove the doctrine, but by some comprehensive statements which either prove or defend it.

I. We learn from the spirit and style of the divine law that every man who dies unrenewed passes through death at once into a state of moral punishment and not of probation.

FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF THE DIVINE LAW.

1. One great source of error on this theme is the habit of overlooking the importance, the fundamental importance,

of the divine law: the importance of it—for, after giving to men the power of moral agency, the very first act which Infinite Wisdom performs for them is the act of giving to them his law: the fundamental importance of it—for this law is the basis of the atonement. If there be no law there is no grace; for grace is the act of pardoning men who have violated the law. We cannot love the atonement unless we love the law which the atonement was designed to honor. The more highly we revere the commandment which is honored by the atonement, so much the more warmly shall we love the atonement itself. We can place no right reliance on the forgiving mercy of Jehovah unless we feel that his law is holy and just and good. The law comes first, with its threatening of endless woe; the gospel comes last, with its conditional promise of pardon. The law comes first; men break it, and therefore deserve to suffer its penalty; the gospel comes last, and finds men already deserving of the penalty. The gospel comes because men have loaded themselves with this ill-desert. Eternal punishment is threatened to men primarily on account of their disobedience to law, not primarily on account of their rejection of the gospel. It is threatened on account of their disobedience to law independently of the gospel, but is not threatened on account of their rejection of the gospel independently of the law.

The divine law is expounded by the normal action of the human conscience. If a man sins today, he feels remorse and lays up materials for remorse tomorrow. If a man sins this week, and if his conscience is in the normal state, he feels remorse and lays up materials for remorse next week. If he sins this month, he feels remorse and treasures up materials for remorse next month. Thus it is the inherent tendency of a wrong act to make provision for remorse just so long as that wrong act is remembered, and it is the intrinsic tendency of conscience to inflict this remorse just so often as

it takes cognizance of the wrong act. Now this remorse, involving, as it does, regret and shame for sin, is the chief part of eternal punishment ; and thus the doctrine of eternal punishment is intimated in the intrinsic tendencies of the moral sense.

THE LAW LOOKS TO THE ESSENTIALS OF CHARACTER.

2. The law of God has respect to principle more than to details. It reaches the very element of character. Whenever we think of God, the law requires us to love him supremely for what he is. Whenever we think of men, the law requires us to love them, impartially, for what they are. Whenever we think of the God-man, the law requires us to love him with the whole heart for what he is. We are required to love every sentient being according to the worth of that being. The primordial truth is, that, if the most benighted pagan does not love his neighbor as himself, he does not love the character which God sustains ; and if he does not love the character of God, he does not love the *principles* involved in the atonement of Christ. True, he has never read the history of the *personal* Christ, but he has rejected the moral qualities essential to the work of Christ. The fundamental truth of the Bible is, that he who hates or rejects his brother, rejects his Father who is in heaven. He who rejects the character of the Father rejects the virtue involved in the atoning work of the Son. The last recorded words which will ever be uttered before our assembled race are, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." God is immanent in the soul of every, even the most imbecile, moral agent ; and he who despises that moral agent, imbecile as he may be, despises the principle involved in dying on the cross to save men.

THE LAW LOOKS TO OUR CONDUCT IN THIS WORLD.

3. The law has respect to the sins which we commit in the present life. We infer that it will have respect to the sins

which we may commit in the other world; but we are conscious of its regarding now the sins which we are committing now. The Ten Commandments relate to theft, murder, and other acts performed on earth. In our text the offenses which Christ condemns are those of undue love to earthly relatives and to earthly pleasures; of refusal to receive the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples. The sins to be enumerated at the day of judgment are those which are committed against men who are sick and imprisoned, hungering and thirsting. The spirit of the whole Bible is that, "if ye live *after the flesh*, ye must die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds *of the body*, ye shall live" (Rom. viii: 13). Will not men be condemned at the judgment for the transgressions which they commit in their disembodied state? We suppose that they will, but this is not the idea prominent in the minds of inspired men. "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done *in the body*, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v: 10; Rom. ii: 5-10). Suppose that in eternity a man renounce his good deeds performed on earth, will he not fall from heaven? The promise implies that he will not thus lapse from right to wrong in eternity. Suppose that a man, dying impenitent, renounces his sinfulness after death, will he not rise from remorse to peace of conscience? The threatening implies that he will not revolutionize his character in eternity from wrong to right, so as to obtain the pardon of his earthly sins. He has walked in the broad path, and at death this broad path does not extend itself by the side of the narrow path into a distant scene of probation, but it opens into the scene of penalty. If he had walked in the narrow way, that way would not have stretched itself out by the side of the broad way into a remote realm of probation, but would have opened into the region of reward. As holy men are

imperfect in their holiness, the reward comes to them by the promise of grace. As unholy men are entirely devoid of holiness, the law stands over them as it stood before the promise was given. The law has threatened punishment for the sins which they committed in this life; these sins were not renounced and not pardoned at the hour of death; when the sinners died they were "condemned already." There is no proof that after death the sentence of condemnation will be canceled; hence it follows that, as the sacrifice for sin has not been accepted at death, there remains nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment. The law holds the ground; therefore conscience holds its place, like the cherubim at the gate of Eden; and its flaming sword turns every way to ward the wanderer off from the peace which he might have enjoyed if he would. Conscience, representing its Maker, declares: "There is no peace to the wicked."

DEATH IS THE GATE THROUGH WHICH MEN PASS INTO MORAL RETRIBUTION.

4. The threatening of the law involves the necessity that every man dying unpardoned pass through temporal death into the scene of eternal remorse, which is the essence of eternal punishment. The law given to Adam in Paradise established this fact: Temporal death is the gate through which the transgressor steps into his moral penalty. The gospel has never modified this fact. It promises that if a transgressor abandon his sin before he comes up to this gate, he shall be pardoned. If, however, he does not comply with this condition, his temporal death remains just as it was at the beginning; the gate, on this side of which is probation, on the other side nothing but punishment. In the case of good men the Redeemer has changed the relations of death; in the case of bad men he has left these relations unchanged. We hear it said: "I have

no positive evidence that after any transgressors have passed the boundary of death they will receive an offer of pardon, but I have no evidence that some will not receive it." Yes, you have evidence that they will not. If there be no proof that forgiveness will take the place of penalty, you have a proof that it will not. The proof lies here: We are bound to believe that the law, being perfect, will be executed in every case, unless we are informed of an exception. We are bound to believe that the legal threatening will be fulfilled, unless there be a promise that it will not be. The perfect law is eternal. The inherent tendencies of conscience will work themselves out in remorse unless they be checked by divine grace. We have no proof that these tendencies will be checked in behalf of men who die unpardoned. The want of proof that they will be, leaves us to the decisive proof that they will not be, checked. The logical presumption always is that the divine law, being perfect, will be fulfilled, its threatening will be executed, retributive justice will prevail. This presumption cannot be rebutted except by the assurance of pardon. When our *first parents* heard the words, "Ye shall not surely die," they were logically bound to disbelieve the statement, unless it were proved to be true. When *we* hear that if we repent in this life our sin will be forgiven, we are logically bound to disbelieve this statement, unless we have a decisive proof that the statement is true. We have this proof. The statement is wonderful, but it is made by Him who is wonderful in counsel. We have a full assurance of it, because we have full faith in our Redeemer. We do believe it, but we believe it with sweet surprise.

TEMPORAL DEATH IS NOT AN ACCIDENT.

5. Here we see how illogical it is to affirm that the death of the body is an accident of our nature, and accordingly is not a barrier between our state of probation and our state of retribution. An accident! The necessity of

it is incorporated in our very constitution. It cannot be averted except by a miracle reversing the wheels of nature. An accident! It is demanded by that law whose "voice is the harmony of nations," and whose "seat is the bosom of God." It is an ordinance of Jehovah, and is indissolubly connected with his moral administration. It is involved in the first threatening which he ever uttered to our race. An accident! "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this" — What comes after this? Probation? An offer of the gospel? "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this — *the judgment.*" Our great Law-Giver has implanted within us a fear of death; the fear is an instinct of our nature. Conscience gives a sacredness to the instinct, and intimates that temporal death is interwoven with a fundamental sanction of the law. We recoil from the king of terrors, not because the last hour of life is painful, but because the next hour is the beginning of our moral retribution. It is a solecism to say, that unrenewed men are on trial at the very moment when they have just gone over the barrier which was raised up in Eden for separating probation from moral penalty; have just passed through the scene which is involved in the original threatening of punishment. Could Adam have understood the law to be, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely go into probation?" Death an accident? 'It has reigned over our race from Adam to Moses.' 'It is the last enemy to be destroyed.' According to law, it will reign and must reign, "for the sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law." Reason asks with surprise, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Faith, rising above law, answers: 'Thanks be to God, which giveth to us as penitent men the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The material of death remains for the penitent, but the spirit of it is changed by a mystery. The death of the God-man was the most mysterious event which ever occurred on earth; and the significance of it implies that

our own death is no accident, but is the result of natural and moral law, and the pains of our death are not meaningless, but are symbols of moral retribution.

II. It is altogether fair to inflict the penalty of the law on men as soon as they have closed their earthly probation in impenitence.

If we believe that the law, independently of the Gospel, requires that the transgressor shall die, and thus enter into the state of moral penalty, we must believe that this requisition is just, and is conducive to the highest good of the universe. If it be just, then it cannot be unfair in itself. If it be conducive to the highest good of the universe, then it cannot be unfair to the universe.

IT IS FAIR TO THE VIRTUOUS.

There are moral agents who have never sinned, and when they perceive the consequences of transgression, they may feel a new dissuasive from committing it; they may feel a new stimulus to advance in holiness. It may be unfair to leave them defenseless against the allurements of vice without letting them see that vice will be visited by the compunctions of conscience. It is the choice of God that men should not commit iniquity; but if they will commit it, in opposition to his choice, his benevolence may so overrule their iniquity as to prevent its being imitated by others. President Dwight has well said that "a strictly just being is a benevolent being." This retributive justice is certainly fair; the want of it may be unfair to those who have no ill-desert.

IT IS FAIR TO THE VICIOUS.

It is fair to those who have this ill-desert. The law requires no more of them than ought to be required. It threatens no more than ought to be threatened. Under this

law men can never receive a punishment severer than they ought to receive. If they have committed the greater sin, they deserve, and will have, the heavier punishment; if they have committed the smaller sin, they deserve, and will have, the lighter punishment. The essential part of their punishment comes through their moral sense, and God speaking through "this faculty can be no more unfair than reason itself is unfair in its very nature.

MEN IGNORANT OF THE GOSPEL.

But is it reasonable to punish men who have never heard of the gospel? They are punished, not for distinctively rejecting the gospel, but for distinctively rejecting the law. God has given his law to them as really as to us. He has threatened them with its penalty as really as he has threatened us. They "are without excuse," for on their consciences, as on tables of living stone, God has inscribed his commandment. Of the written law, the objector says: "As many as have sinned without law will have a probation after death." Of the same law the apostle says: "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law" (Rom. ii: 12-16). Our compassionate Redeemer has taught us that if we, with our larger knowledge, disobey his commands, we shall be punished with many stripes; and if other men, with their smaller knowledge, disobey these commands, they will be punished with few stripes. *But they will be punished.* If they do not deserve to be punished, then they have not sinned. If they have sinned, then they deserve to be punished. If they have committed ten degrees of wrong, they will endure ten degrees of remorse. If they have committed only one degree of wrong, they will endure only one degree of remorse. But, ten degrees or one degree of remorse, it cannot be avoided unless the wrong be forgiven. According to the mere constitution of the soul, it can never end unless conscience lose its normal power.

It were singular, indeed, if men were to be freed from penal remorse on account of their ignorance, when their ignorance implies their sin ; when, having eyes, they see not, because they will not see ; when, knowing certain parts of the truth, they hold back other parts of it because they choose not to think of it ! It were singular, indeed, if the heathen were to be freed from penal remorse because Christians have disobeyed their Lord's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature ! Singular, if the refusal of Christians to evangelize the world should be turned into a bounty for the heathen, and release them from the claims of the law as it is written on the most authoritative part of their constitution !

THE DANGER OF SPECULATING AWAY THE LAW OF GOD.

Here, my friends, is our special danger. If we speculate in favor of a probation after death for men who have only one degree of knowledge, we embark on a stream flowing into whirlpools in which hundreds have been wrecked before us. If the heathen in heathen lands are to have a probation after death, because they have only one degree of religious knowledge, then the heathen in Christian lands are to have the same probation ; for there are millions of men in our cities and hamlets, in Vienna, Berlin, London, St. Petersburg, New York, Boston, throughout the length and breadth of every evangelized country, who are as ignorant of moral truth as are pagan idolaters. If men with only one degree of knowledge are to have a probation after death, then men who have only two degrees of knowledge are to have the same ; for one small degree of our small knowledge cannot make an infinite difference in our prospects for the future. A few additional units of our little thoughts do not reach the infinity of duration which cannot be reached by the first units. In this way every man will decide for himself that he is too ignorant to receive the threatened penalty ; that he has been

morally insane when he sinned, he has been idiotic under temptation ; *his* case is peculiar, and is to be excepted from the common rule. "The wisest of men see through a glass darkly ; but *I* am blind. Do *I* know enough to be punished, as the law requires, for the hurried acts of this brief life?" The critical fact is, that, with reason or without reason or against reason, it is natural for man to mitigate the enormity of his own sin and indulge in the illusions of hope for himself. If limited knowledge will nullify the ill-desert of one man, it will nullify the ill-desert of every man. If the smaller sin do not deserve the smaller degree of remorse forever, then the larger sin does not deserve the larger degree of remorse forever. If the garden flower standing up in the sunlight do not cast its shadow on the ground, then the gigantic oak will fail to cast its own shadow. The sun treats all bodies according to their proportion. The divine law is not "The soul that sinneth greatly it shall die," nor "The soul that sinneth often it shall die ;" but the law is "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Whoso offendeth in one point is guilty of all." The chain of the divine commandments is composed of many links. "Whichever link you strike," whether it be the tenth or the ten-thousandth, "it breaks the chain alike." If the chain is broken in one, even the smallest, link, it is as really broken as if every link were shattered into ten thousand fragments.

A FAIR CHANCE TO AVOID PUNISHMENT.

It is a well-nigh profane remark that the heathen will have a probation in the future life, because in the present life they have not had a fair chance for avoiding punishment. Punishment is not drawn out as a lottery ticket, on the conditions of luck and chance. It is inflicted according to moral principle — the principle of its being deserved and its being necessary for the good of the universe. A fair chance! As if the divine law had violated its own fundamental principle, and

had threatened what cannot be fairly inflicted! A fair chance is not given to the heathen? But "the law is a transcript of the divine perfections;" the law is God himself commanding, threatening. What the law requires, God requires; what the law threatens, God threatens; what the law inflicts, God inflicts. If the law withholds from men a fair chance to avoid its penalty, then God withholds it. If the heathen when disobeying the law do not deserve punishment, then God threatens what they do not deserve; then the law is not worthy of being obeyed; then God is not worthy of being obeyed. But "let God be found true, but every man a liar;" and, my friends, whenever we speak doubtfully about a fair chance being given to the heathen, we are in danger of profaning the very character of Him whose law is expressed in unqualified terms, and threatens men with punishment just as if the punishment resulted from the reason of things; just as if every man in this world had a fair opportunity for avoiding the sin which is the occasion of remorse.

WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH BEINGS WHO ARE NOT MORAL AGENTS?

But are there not some members of our race who have not attained the power of moral action, and are incapacitated for disobeying as well as for obeying the law? Shall not they have a probation in the future life? To those beings, if any such exist, the law has not promised good, nor has it threatened evil. Why do we say that they will have a future probation? So far as their immediate responsibility to law is concerned, they are like the stones in the street; and God "is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham," and to save them from all probation. If infants die before they can distinguish good from evil, and before they are able either to obey or disobey the law, why do we say that after death they must pass through a state of moral trial? It is replied that we may give to the doctrine of unending punish-

ment a more lenient form if we encourage the belief that infants, dying before actual sin, will pass through a scene of probation. A more lenient form! We prefer to entertain the hope that our Redeemer will exclaim: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" to come unto me without any encounter with the adversaries of their souls; to come unto me at once—"and it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer." As the weeping mother stands by the little hillock in the graveyard, her instincts prompt her to hope that her little child is safe in the arms of her Saviour, and is not doomed to bear the temptations which once broke down the virtue of principalities and powers. A probation is full of dangers. Once they were too great for thrones and dominions and hierarchies in heaven. Why must we suppose that our little children are summoned from life by the bugle rousing them to the warfare in which the angels of God met an ominous defeat and fell from the battlements of heaven itself? Why may we not rather hope that our little children are charmed away to Paradise by the sweet voices of the angels, inviting them to sympathize in the joys of victory without having imperiled their souls amid the terrors of the battle?

III. Unless we have not only evidence, but also strong and striking evidence, to the contrary, we are bound to believe that men who persevere in sin from the beginning to the end of this life will persevere in sin forever, and that men who refuse to obtain their pardon here will never obtain it hereafter.

THE DANGER OF UNDERESTIMATING THE EVIL OF SIN.

In our thoughts on this subject we fall into serious error if we overlook the intrinsic evil of sin. One part of this evil consists in the fact that the inherent tendency of sin is to perpetuate itself. If we do wrong today, we facilitate our wrong-

doing tomorrow ; if we do wrong this week, we get a new impulse for our doing wrong next week ; if we do wrong this month, we are prompted, encouraged, emboldened to do wrong next month. So the accumulating and reduplicating power of sin proceeds from year to year. So we must believe that it will proceed from century to century, unless we have signal proof that the process will be arrested by divine grace. That the process is often arrested in this life we believe, because we have not only proof, but signal proof, of it. That the process will be arrested in the life to come, we have no right to believe ; for we have no signal proof of it — we have no proof at all. The solemn truth is that the mystery of sin lies, not in the continuance of it, but in the beginning of it.

WHEN DOES A MAN FULLY DECIDE TO LIVE FOR THE WORLD?

We are told by German divines that the probation of a man will or may end, not when he dies, but when he has fully established his character in sin. Alas ! my friends, the solemn question is : How long may a man indulge his wrong choice before he fully confirms himself in it ? And the solemn answer to the question is : A man makes his full decision to live for the world, when he puts forth his first choice to do so. Life and death are placed before him ; he chooses death rather than life, and that choice is his complete decision to live for the world rather than God. So far as he is left to himself, it is his final decision. Left to himself, he will never recall it. He has chosen to die ; he *has died* morally. Being dead, he will never rise to life by his own free will. He has destroyed himself. He has laid himself down in his spiritual grave, and he will never leave it until he is lifted up by the same almighty power which will raise the dead at the last day. This power can regenerate men after they have committed the unpardonable sin, after they have entered eternity, after they have received their sentence at the judg-

ment ; but, for some reasons which only Omniscience can perfectly comprehend, He will never pardon the man who has committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, never pardon the man who has been condemned at the judgment, never pardon the man who has not repented in this life. We must believe that He never will, because we must believe that the stream of human transgression will flow onward and downward in the future as it has flowed in the past, unless there be not only proof, but signal proof, that the uniform flow of the stream will be stopped. A striking change in the course of things demands a striking proof.

THE IMPROBABILITY OF REGENERATION AFTER DEATH.

Again, if sin be ever arrested in its natural process, it will be arrested by the act of God regenerating the soul. Now, the regenerating act is a supernatural one, and we have no right to believe in any supernatural phenomenon without strong and signal proof of it. As the Bible declares the unrenewed mind to be dead, so it represents the renewal of that mind as the resurrection of the dead. As it declares the unregenerate mind to be devoid of holiness, so it represents the renewal of that mind as the new creation of it. According to the rules of logic, we have no right to believe in this resurrection of the soul, this new creation of it, unless we have decisive evidence of the fact. We have no such evidence that the wonderful work will be performed on men who went unrenewed from the earth. No one pretends that there is any decisive evidence of such a wonder, and the most learned expositors of the Bible concede that there is no important evidence of it.

IMPROBABILITY OF A TRANSGRESSOR'S OBTAINING HIS PARDON IN THE FUTURE LIFE.

Still again, the act of pardoning a transgressor is wonderful. It is the great mystery of mysteries. Will a man

rob God? All sin is robbery. Does a man hate his fellow-men? All such hatred is murder. Now, will the time ever come when the robber or the murderer can reflect on his sin and feel no poignancy of remorse? How is it possible that even in heaven the pardoned sinner will not lie prostrate in regret and shame and compunction in view of the crimes which he committed on earth? How is it possible that a malefactor who has taken the lives of his wife and children, and has repented of his crime on the eve of his dying on the gallows, will rise at once to dwell among the angels above, and will never be the object of fear or dread or even suspicion among his fellow-saints, and will never reflect with shame and horror upon his crime, and 'every tear shall be wiped from his eyes?' How is that possible? On any principle of science, it is impossible. It is contrary to the constitution of the soul. We cannot logically believe that the phenomenon will ever take place, unless it be proved by overwhelming evidence. Of the fact that a man will be pardoned if he repent before he dies, we have this overwhelming evidence. We accept it, as I before said, with sweet surprise, because we are assured of it by our great High Priest who has gone into the heavens. But that a man will be pardoned if he does not repent before he dies, we have not this overpowering evidence. The most sober-minded critics admit that we have no probable evidence of it. Therefore we have no right to believe it; we are logically bound to disbelieve it. Unbelief is only half enough; disbelief is the demand of logic. Men say that there is a mystery in the Biblical doctrine of future punishment. There is a deeper mystery in the doctrine of future pardon. It is easy to imagine that a malefactor may feel remorse forever. It is not easy to imagine that throughout eternity he will never feel compunction in the remembrance of his most cruel sin. When the apostle Paul reflects in heaven on the persecuting spirit which he once indulged, and which is now completely

forgiven, he can only solve the mystery by saying, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

IV. The general impression of the Bible is, that no man who dies unrenewed and unforgiven will after death transform his character and obtain his pardon.

I speak now of the general impression, not of particular and doubtful words. We cannot analyze all the methods in which this impression is made. It is often made by intimations, occult analogies, apparently undesigned coincidences, the frequent recurrence of one and the same idea. It is made by the common trend of thought, by the continuous flow of sentiment. In a majestic river we may search out some little eddies in which the waters move backward or round and round, but the main body of the waters moves forward and swells and surges in one direction. We may look at the eddies, but we must move along with the main stream.

THE PARALLELISM OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES.

One of the many ways in which the Bible makes its main impression is seen in the parallelism of its statements. Our text contains more than one specimen of the many passages implying that the condition on which a bad man will be finally condemned is the character which he sustained in the present world, and is parallel to the condition on which a good man will be finally rewarded. The reward is placed in one scale, and balances the punishment placed in the other scale. Each is weighed by its opposite.

In our text we read: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x: 32, 33). When and how will Christ acknowledge that one class of men are to be rewarded as his friends? He

will say at the final judgment: "Come, ye blessed; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." When and how will Christ deny that the other class of men are to be rewarded as his friends? He will say at the final judgment: "Depart from me; I know you not." What has been done by the accepted class? They have confessed their Lord "*before men*"—*in this world*. What has been done by the rejected class? They have denied Christ "*before men*"—*in this world*. When men have 'died in their sins,' are they to enjoy a future probation in which they will so revolutionize their character as to obtain forgiveness for their bad life? Then the parallelism teaches that men who 'died in the faith' are to have a future probation in which they may transform their character and deny the Lord who bought them. Thus the blessedness of the saints is insecure. What was "bound *on earth*" may not be bound in heaven, and what was "loosed *on earth*" may not be loosed in heaven (see Matt. xvi: 19; xviii: 18; John xx: 23. See also such passages as I Peter iv: 17, 18; John viii: 21-24, compared with Heb. xi: 13).

The instructive description which our Redeemer has given of the last day is another instance of the parallel truths. To those on the right hand he will say, "I was a stranger, athirst, naked, sick, imprisoned, and ye ministered unto me." These acts of ministry were performed in this world. The unselfish and self-depreciating temper of the saints continued until the judgment. To those on the left hand he will say, "I was a stranger, an hungered, naked, sick, imprisoned, and ye did not minister unto me." The acts of ministry were refused in this world. The selfish and self-justifying spirit continued until the judgment. Was there to be after death a probation in which men who had died unrenewed would renounce their life-long selfishness and rise from remorse to peace of conscience? Then there was to be a probation in which men who had cherished benevolence on earth would

perhaps fall from their virtue and sink from peace to remorse. Thus again, the blessedness of the saints is insecure. The whole tenor of the Bible, however, assures us that the men who are to be finally and formally rewarded had been pardoned as soon as they repented on earth, and they were not to forfeit their pardon in the intermediate state. The parallelism teaches that the men who 'died and were buried,' like the rich man in the parable, were not after their death to revolutionize their character so as to receive the formal plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

There are scores of passages which become emphatic by setting reward over against punishment; the former certainly following the death of good men, the latter as certainly following the death of bad men. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii: 36). The common use of such parallels is a key unlocking the numerous, as well as momentous, promises that a penitent man will be exempted from the remorse threatened by the law, for these promises imply that the impenitent man will suffer what the law threatens. Where a promise comes there is an exemption; no promise, no exemption. Who can fail to understand the graphic announcement of our Lord, "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark x: 29, 30)? Does not this promise imply that a man before he enters his grave must abstain from supreme delight in his lands and houses? Does not the current of scriptural parallelism bear us onward to the belief that, if the man, before he enters his grave, will persevere in cherishing a supreme delight in his lands and houses, he will form no exception to the law inflicting punishment on selfishness?

SODOM, GOMORRAH, CHORAZIN, BETHSAIDA, AND OTHER
CITIES.

There is another way in which the Bible makes the general impression that men who "die in their sins" will remain in their sins until the judgment, and will then be condemned according to the deeds "done in the body." This way is not in abstract allusions to men of a particular character, but in concrete allusions to particular men. In our text Christ says to his ministers: "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words — shake off the dust of your feet" as a testimony against them — give them the expressive sign that all further efforts for their salvation are futile; "verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." Two thousand years had elapsed since the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah had been consigned to punishment. During those long centuries they had remained unforgiven. Thousands of years were yet to pass away before the last trumpet would summon them to the great assize. During those coming centuries the guilty men will remain unforgiven; and when the day of judgment shall arrive, they will receive a doom simply "more tolerable" than the doom of the men who rejected the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples. And those men who rejected the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples — they, too, were to exist between the day of their death and the day of judgment; and in that interval were they to transform their character and free themselves from remorse? At the end of that interval they were to receive a punishment *less* tolerable than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. When our Lord alludes to the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, he deems it needful to declare the same affecting truth. They had not repented when he spoke; they were not to repent during the sad interval between the hour of his speaking and the hour of final judgment, and at that ever-to-be-

remembered hour they were to receive a doom simply "more tolerable" than the doom of Chorazin and Bethsaida. Our compassionate Redeemer lifted up the veil which hung over the destiny of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum, and unveiled the sad truth that those men were to remain as they died, unrenewed and unpardoned; and when they shall meet him at the solemn tribunal, they will receive a penalty *less* tolerable than the penalty of the Tyrians and Sidonians (Matt. x: 14, 15; xi: 21-24; Mark vi: 11; Luke x: 13-15). These particular individuals constituting these great cities are embodiments of the truth which applies to all individuals, that if they die unrenewed and unpardoned they will remain so forever.

INCIDENTAL IMPRESSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

There is an incidental way in which the Old Testament makes this general impression, that men who die in their sins will not begin to live in holiness during any future probation. The Old Testament suggests the idea that no startling *change* occurs to the soul between the day of leaving its body and the day of its rising to the final judgment. It suggests the idea that even the saints will have a calm and peaceful life, uninterrupted by signal changes — a life of consciously sweet repose, in which "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." We need not allude to any reasons for the fact, but it is a fact that some of the plaintive singers of Israel look forward to the grave and exclaim: "In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" "Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?" "Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave?" "Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the

living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." (Psalms vi: 5; lxxxviii: 10, 11, 12; cxv: 17; Isaiah xxxviii: 18, 19.)

How shall we explain these moaning words? We have no time to explain them now; but they suggest the idea that, according to a picture formed at certain times by the poets of the Old Testament, the saints in Paradise before the resurrection were not to pass through striking novelties; they were not to be enraptured as with the varying splendors of the Jewish ritual, to be thrilled as with the alternating music of the dulcimer, the psaltery, the harp; to be enlivened as by the bright shining of the sun, moon, stars, and by the brilliant alternations of summer and winter. They were to enjoy a real bliss; still it was to be the bliss of tranquillity and repose. Now, does the Old Testament suggest the idea that while the sainted Jews were to pass through no diversified triumphs until the last day, the Gentiles would be passing through the ecstatic experience of a moral resurrection, and the yet more thrilling experience of a moral creation? We do, indeed, hear of the king of Babylon falling down from his earthly pomp to an abode of misery, but we never hear of a single evil-minded man rising up from Gehenna to Paradise. We never hear of one pagan after another ascending from the scene of remorse to the scene of everlasting reward. We are told of no joy among the angels of God over one idolater who repented in Gehenna, of no lost piece of silver found in that dismal abode, of no wandering sheep lost among those dark and dreary mountains and then discovered and reclaimed. If the saints are portrayed as living a life of tranquillity, the sinners are not pictured forth as rising up in the sudden triumphs of regeneration, and the amazing ecstasies of pardon.

INCIDENTAL IMPRESSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament, independently of its particular statements, makes the same general impression with that of the

Old Testament. In its pictorial style it represents the final judgment as near, as at hand, as to occur speedily. It means that, in diversified aspects and in various relations, Christ is coming quickly to judge the world. So far as our practical interests are to be decided, the Judge is now at the door. Very soon are our souls to leave our bodies, and, between the hour of leaving them and the hour of re-entering them, they will pass through no exciting process like that of the resurrection from spiritual death. Between those two hours the character will not be created anew, and there will be no such ecstatic event as the blotting out of the name from the catalogue of the lost, and the sudden writing of that name on the catalogue of the redeemed. Where practical interests are involved, we may speak of two events as near, if there be nothing of essential importance between them. With solemn emphasis we may speak of our death and the final judgment as close to each other ; for between the two there is to be no essential revolution in our character, in our purposes, in our hopes or fears for the future. In viewing a range of mountains, we look upon the first as near to the second, because there is nothing which arrests our attention between them. We speak of the moon as near to the earth, because there is not a solitary globe between the two. Of two objects, the nearest is in one sense near. In accordance with this mode of speech, the writers of the New Testament portray the last day of the world as near the last day which a man will spend in the world. In their view, character was the chief thing of value, the transformation of character was the paramount good, and the pardon of sin was the most splendid accompaniment of that good. Accordingly, in their view, the intermediate state merited not a moment's notice as a time for working out the moral transformation of a man who was not morally transformed when he died. They did not linger on any description of the intermediate state as a period stretching onward for hundreds and thousands

of years ; but they passed over it, and passed by it, as a period in which there was no ground of hope for any man who closed his earthly life in supreme love to the world. So far as it related to any prospect of radically changing the character of a man, the intermediate state was regarded as of no consequence ; and the gate of death and the bar of judgment were moved up close to each other, so that between the two there was no room for resurrections, and creations, and new decrees of pardon, and new arrangements for transferring a soul from a scene of remorse to a scene of peace and glory.

Whether we can or cannot account for the Biblical impression that the awards of the future life depend upon our conduct in this life, the impression still remains. Here and there we see a profile on a mountain ; we cannot find the projections and depressions which produce it, but there the profile is. Now and then we place an unusual confidence in the testimony of a witness at court ; we cannot tell whether this confidence arises from his words themselves, or from the connections in which his words were uttered, or from his tones of voice, or cast of countenance ; but there the confidence is. Our Saviour declares "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it : and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew xii : 36, 37 ; xvi : 25). Whether such verses as these were or were not designed to teach the doctrine of this discourse, they tend to make the impression that the doctrine is true. Whether this impression be produced by the words themselves, or by the light reflected upon them from other words, there the impression is. Many a gem derives its main value from its setting and from things associated with it. Now, we need to remember that the doctrine of eternal reward and penalty is not an in-

tricate one. It needs no metaphysical niceties for its explanation. It relates to a large fact; a fact level to the apprehension of common men, and in which common men have their chief practical interest. The Bible was written, not mainly for metaphysicians, but for the mass of plain men and women. It was written with the prominent design of teaching them what they must do in this world in order to be saved in the next world. If, as a whole, this honest book has made the impression on the mass of its honest readers that their well-being hereafter depends upon their words spoken and deeds done here, then we are bound to regard the impression as true. That the Bible has made this impression on common men through the ages is too evident to require a proof. If we can avoid this impression, then we can avoid the impression that our eternal state is determined at the general judgment; we can avoid the impression that there will be a general judgment; that a vicarious atonement was ever made by the God-man, or was ever needed. If the Bible has stamped a false impression on the majority of its readers in regard to the great fact in which they feel the deepest concern, then the momentous query arises: Did the framers of the Bible speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? Our views of a trustworthy inspiration must be affected by our denial that the general impression of the Bible on the matter of our highest practical interest is an accurate one.

V. The progress of thought in the Bible leads us to the belief that men determine irrevocably in this life what is to be their condition in the next life.

Our faith rises with the rising light, moves onward in the line of the Biblical movement, goes not only in the way which the Bible marks out, but also in the way to which it points. If the earlier books of the Old Testament contained the more terrific expressions of this doctrine, and if the later books contained less fearful expressions of it; if the New

Testament were marked by still milder statements than the Old ; if John the Baptist had been gentler than the prophet Daniel ; if Simon Peter had been more soothing than John the Baptist ; if the apostle Paul had been yet more cautious in giving intimations of the doctrine, and if the blessed Redeemer had carefully abstained from alluding to it, then the proof of it would have a constantly diminishing force, and, like the Fall of the Staubbach, would vanish into mist. But the progress of thought in the Bible is exactly the reverse of this. It begins in the earlier prophets with more indefinite intimations, goes onward in the later prophets with more fearful statements, becomes yet more alarming in the apostles, and takes its most determinate form in the words of Him who spake as man never spake. In proving that probation ends at death, we are moving on and with the rising tide of Biblical instruction toward the truth. In attempting to prove that there is a probation after death, we are moving against the full current of the Bible, we are stemming its quickest torrent.

CHRIST'S METHOD OF TEACHING.

The most tender-hearted of men had many opportunities for teaching that persons who die unpardoned may obtain their pardon hereafter. If he could with truth, he might have said that the unrelenting servant was cast into prison and afterward paid his entire debt ; but our Redeemer felt it needful to declare that the servant had nothing to pay. The slothful servant hid his lord's money ; why was he not punished for a time, and allowed to use the once-neglected talent for regaining his lord's favor ? 'Take the talent from him,' is the order, 'for from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' Why were not the tares transplanted and transformed into wheat ? No ; they were burned up, and could never rise from their ashes. The branches bearing no fruit — why were they not cut off and laid away for a season,

and then reunited to the vine where they could bud and blossom? No; they were severed from the stock, they were withered, and then they were burned. There was to be no change after they were consumed. The five foolish virgins — they came back to the wedding festival; why were they not admitted to its joys? The festival went on without them. They came back, indeed, but too late; and there stand forever the emphatic words, "The door was shut." In scores of instances our compassionate Redeemer might, if he could with truth, have revealed a probation after death. If he believed in this probation, why did he not relieve the fears of men who had no such belief? If he did not believe in it, who are we that we should exceed him in our foresight and philanthropy? The decisive fact is this: The God-man, who came for the purpose of seeking and saving the lost, has taught more imperatively than any other one that men who are lost when they die are lost forever. It is the mild Redeemer who has pictured before our eyes the "gulf fixed" between Paradise and Gehenna — fixed so that no man can pass over it. He has not told us, he has not given us the faintest intimation, that the magnificent enginery of the gospel, in all its majesty and power, and freighted with all the means of grace, was to be rolling over that mysterious gulf for hundreds and thousands of years, and plunging into the chasm for the rescue of men who, like Dives, were praying for their brethren on earth.

I have left no time to enlarge on one of the most important considerations favoring the doctrine of this discourse. *The practical influence of the doctrine is a visible seal of its truth.* It exalts the importance of the present life, of every day, of every hour. It intimates the grandeur of the human soul, on every decision of which may hang consequences of infinite moment. It illustrates the dignity of a Christian minister, the results which may come from a single address to his

audience (Matt. x: 13-15; Luke x: 5-16). It enforces the necessity of missions to the heathen. The sign of its truth is found in the resemblance between the zeal which it now excites in the hearts of our own foreign missionaries, and the zeal which it once excited in the hearts of the apostles. Those inspired men felt and acted as if both Jews and Gentiles were hastening to the end of their probation at the end of their life; and therefore the followers of Christ must be hastening from city to city, and be crying aloud in the words of their Lord, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark xiii: 35-37, and parallel passages). The logical principle from which their missionary enterprise resulted lies imbedded in the words: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Romans x: 12-15.) The doctrine of Paul in regard to the heathen is developed in his first and second chapters to the Romans; the practical influence of it is seen in the rapidity of his flight from city to city, ceasing "not to warn every one night and day with tears." "In journeyings often," he says, "in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." There is one short verse which, like a flash of lightning, illumines the history of the apostle's movements: "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for

him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost." All was resolute, all was quick, the danger was imminent, the Judge was at the door.

The spirit of the discourse addressed by our Lord to his earliest preachers, is breathed forth whenever he calls modern preachers to their solemn office. When they are ordained for their work, he seems to open the windows of heaven and to repeat his awe-inspiring words: "He that heareth you heareth me ; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me ; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me." He seems to forewarn men of the hour when they may listen for the last time to the voice of the preacher, and may despise his message in the last act of their lives, and may thus become like Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum. At any moment the men who spurn the message of Christ's ambassadors may rush into a doom less tolerable than that of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah. Just so critical are the duties of a preacher and the responsibilities of a hearer. *Both preachers and hearers shall be "judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works."*

